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Correspondence

THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN COLLEGE COURSES IN THE MODERN LANGUAGES, A COMMENT

Managing Editor, MODERN LANGUAGE JOURNAL:

In the Journal for November 1921 appeared a very sane article on the question of the use of the foreign language as the medium of instruction in college courses. The object of the following is not to take issue with the views expressed in the article, but to point out the fact that the writer of the article has not made any new discoveries nor offered any new suggestions. In the Journal for March 1918 an article on Nineteenth Century German Literature for Undergraduates by Frederick W. J. Heuser takes almost exactly the same ground. To go back still further in the past, and to take only one instance, for at least twenty-five years the modern language courses at Harvard have been given on the plan suggested by Mr. Hoskins. That is to say, they are in two groups, one devoted to the literary aspect of the work in which parallel courses offer the student the opportunity to do his work and follow his lectures in either English or the foreign language according to his taste and ability. The other group affords a smaller number of students, who may plan to teach, a chance to study the language from the point of view of conversation or grammar and composition. Furthermore, the scheme suggested as a possible future achievement is one that is already in active operation, though the catalogs may not show it by actual grouping and designation of courses, in more than one state university of the Middle West.

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WHAT IS ANNOTATION?

Managing Editor, MODERN LANGUAGE JOURNAL:

Since the unwritten law of the land has decreed that literary masterpieces shall be presented to college classes in predigested and guaranteed innocuous form, may we not at least demand that full nourishment be assured from what remains of the original? The question is surely rhetorical, but how is it answered in practice? Too often the first and controlling idea seems to be that annotation should be copious. To this end editors will conscientiously translate every Latin phrase that may have escaped the refining process; they would feel unworthy of their profession if a single "idiom" were left unregistered in the notes for the convenience of the student preparing for his examination. We have all heard students advising each other to "learn the notes and let